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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4706

INFO RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN 5320

BT

UNCLAS ROME 6407

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GE

FOR COORDINATION WITH

StateSUBJECT: ITALIAN PRESS REACTION TO BRANDT RESIGNATION

1. DESPITE CURRENT ITALIAN PREOCCUPATION WITH UPCOMING DIVORCE REFERENDUM AND SENSATIONAL KIDNAPPING OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL, BRANDT RESIGNATION LEAD ITEM REPEATEDLY IN PRESS AND STATE CONTROLLED RADIO/TELEVISION NEWSCASTS. RADIO/TELEVISION TREATMENT SYMPATHETIC, FOCUSING ON BRANDT'S ASSUMPTION OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUILLAUME AFFAIR.

2. INDEPENDENT PRESS REACTION SIMILARLY SYMPATHETIC TO BRANDT, THE MAN, BUT SKEPTICAL THAT SPY SCANDAL ALONE RESPONSIBLE FOR RESIGNATION. THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT IN PRESS THAT CHANCELLOR "ALREADY CONDEMNED" IN GERMANY AND BY HIS PARTY FOR PARTIAL FAILURE OF OSTPOLITIK AND BY RISING INFLATION" THAT HAD "ERASED THE BASIS OF HIS POPULARITY".

/LA STAMPA/, PRESTIGIOUS TURIN DAILY QUOTED ABOVE, ADDED THAT "FOR SOME TIME (BRANDT) HAS BEEN TIRED, NERVOUS AND WAS DRINKING". DRINKING SPECULATION NOT RAISED ELSEWHERE.

3. PRESTIGIOUS /CORRIERE DELLA SERA/ OF MILAN COMMENTED THAT BRANDT'S FALL FROM POWER MEANT REDUCED HOPE FOR GERMAN INITIATIVE TO SAVE EUROPEAN UNITY. CORRIERE REPORTED AS RUMOUR THAT CIA SUPPLYING INFORMATION ON SPY SCANDAL DIRECTLY TO HELMUT KOKEL OF OPPOSITION CDU.

4. SOCIALIST /AVANTI/ AND COMMUNIST /UNITA/ THEORIZED BRANDT SET UP FOR FALL BY FED. REPUBLIC COUNTER ESPIONAGE AGENTS COOPERATING WITH CHANCELLOR'S POLITICAL ENEMIES.

5. ITALIAN PRESS UNIVERSALLY APPREHENSIVE BRANDT'S SUCCESSOR SCHMIDT WILL FAVOR DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND U.S.- GERMAN RELATIONS OVER EEC COMMUNITY CONCERNS. VOLPE

DST-28244

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